

*You have the ability to make a wise decision . . . Arrive Alive!*



# Life After Tragedy

***A true account of a petty officer's tragic mishap that resulted from fatigue.***

*The Naval Safety Center wishes to thank DC1(SW) Neal Beard of NAS Meridian for sharing his story.*

## Before Taking the Trip . . .

- Plan enough time.
- Don't speed!
- Get plenty of rest; beware of fatigue.
- Notify someone where you will be going and when you will be leaving.
- Have emergency contact information in the vehicle if you are driving.
- Wear your seat belts!

## Automobile Crash Facts

- One out of every five drivers will be involved in a traffic crash this year.
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among people age 44 and younger and the number one cause of head and spinal cord injury.
- Approximately 35,000 people die in motor vehicle crashes each year. About 50 percent (17,000) of these people could be saved if they wore their safety belts.
- In a 30-mph collision an unbelted 160-lb person can strike another passenger, crash through a windshield and/or slam into the vehicle's interior with a 4,800-lb force.

*Source: James Madison University Office of Public Safety and Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles*

## Seat Belt Statistics

- A common cause of death and injury to children in motor vehicles is being crushed by adults who are not wearing safety belts.
- One out of four serious injuries to passengers is caused by occupants being thrown into each other.
- Of every 100 children who die in motor vehicle crashes at least 80 would survive if they were properly secured in an approved child safety seat or safety belts.
- Seat belts are the single most effective occupant protection device in vehicles. From 1975-2000, seat belts are estimated to have saved 135,102 lives, with 11,889 lives saved in 2000 alone. *[National Highway Traffic Safety Administration]*

Source: James Madison University Office of Public Safety and Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles

# A Family With New Hopes



## ● September 2003

DC1(SW) Neal Beard was awarded sole guardianship of his children. He made preparations to move to Houston, Texas for a new duty station.



From left: Brandon (10), Jesse (11) and Breana (9)



## ● October 25, 2003, 9:40 a.m.

Neal rented a 2003 Mitsubishi Diamante similar to the one in the picture and left Corpus Christi for Houston to view a new apartment. Afterwards, they drove back to Corpus Christi. Jesse rode in the front, and Brandon in the backseat with Breana. Everyone was wearing a seatbelt.

# The Tragedy That Changed Many Lives

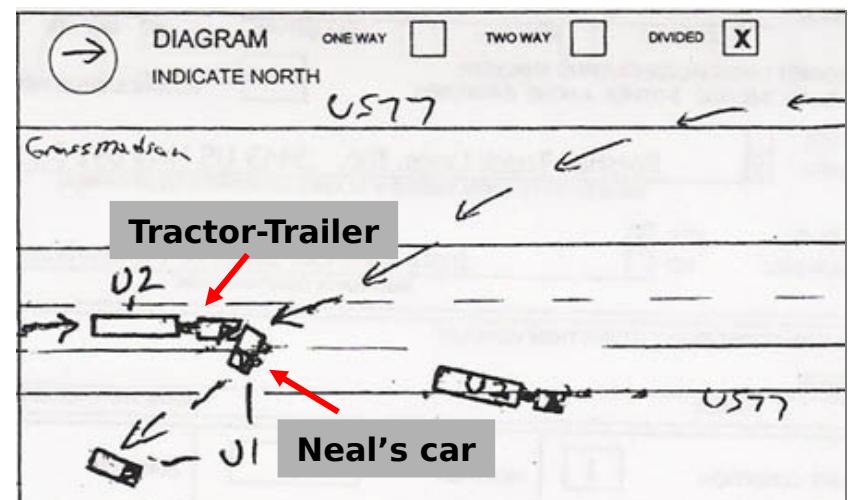


## ● October 25, 2003, 4:20 p.m.

The car, heading northbound, collided with a tractor-trailer in a southbound lane on US Highway 77, 54 miles from Corpus Christi, Texas.

Jesse and Neal survived but were in critical condition.

Breana and Brandon were killed instantly.



# Death Knocked On the Door



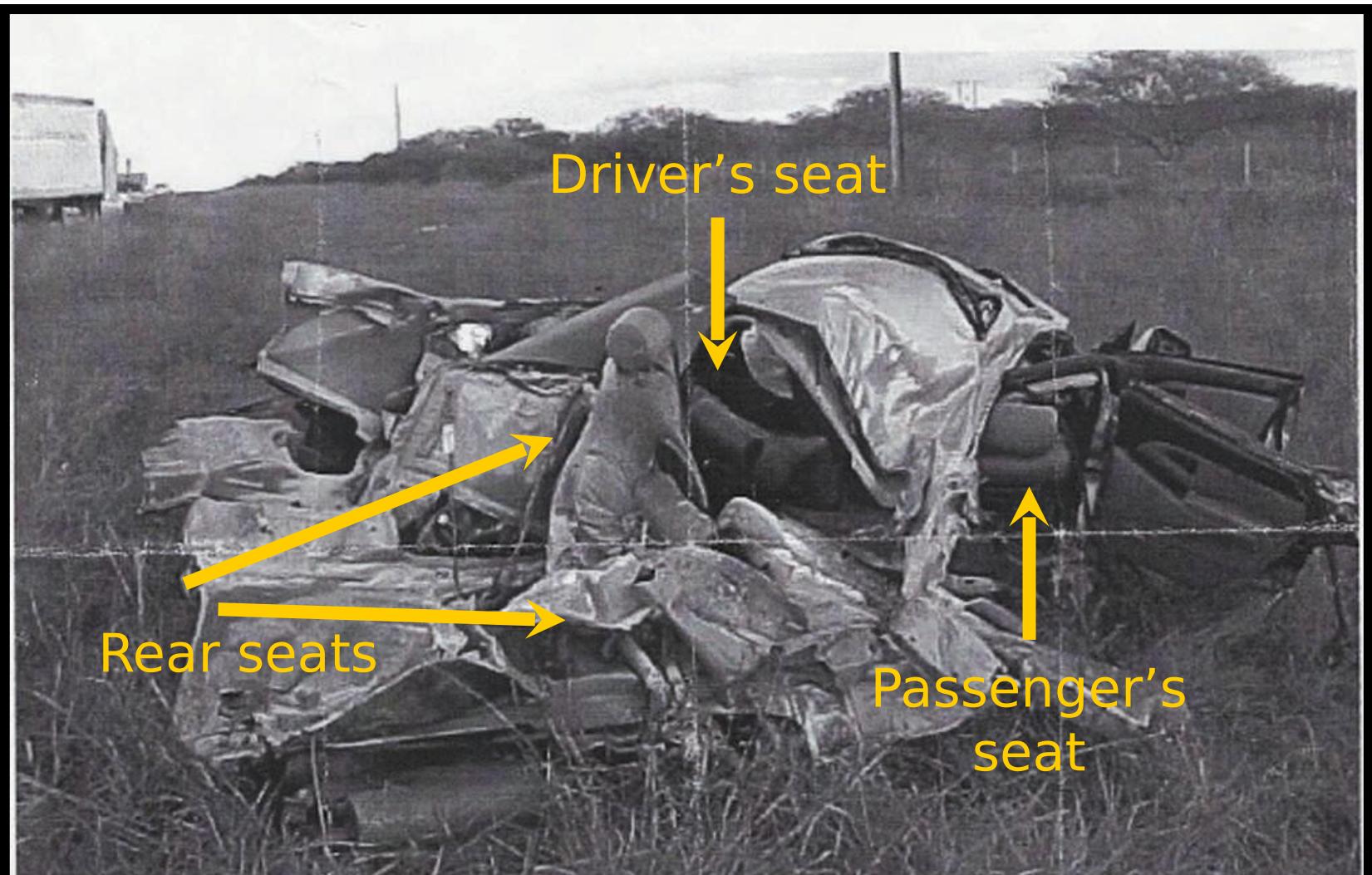
● **October 25, 2003**

**5:03 p.m.** Jesse was transported to Citizens Hospital in Victoria, Texas.

**5:20 p.m.** Neal was in a coma and transported via HALO Flight to Corpus Christi Spohn Memorial Hospital.

● **October 28, 2003**

Neal was transported via Life Flight to Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas where he was medically maintained in a coma.



Fatal Factor in Mishap: Fatigue



## What Fatigue Mishap Can Do to Your Body

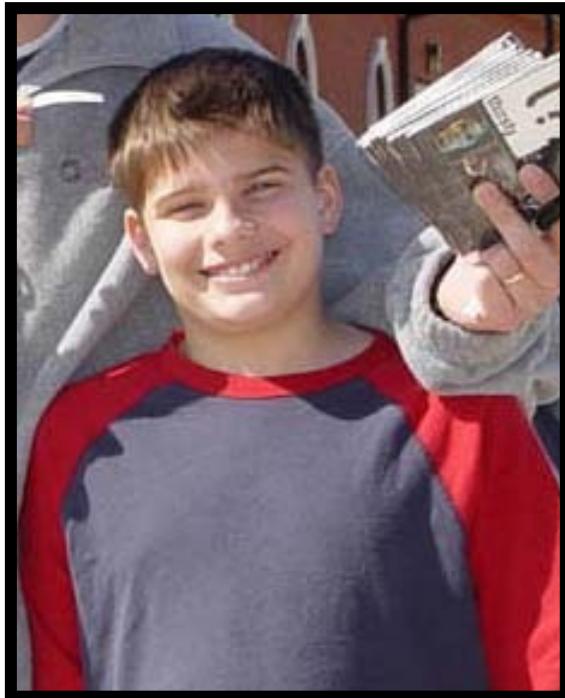
- Pelvic fractures
- Collapsed lung
- Pneumonia
- Full thickness burn at left, upper extremity
- Fracture of the neck at C2
- Coma
- Brain damage
  - 6 Contusions
  - 5 Hemorrhages

## Monetary Cost of Mishap

- Life Flight by Helicopter & 3 days in a civilian hospital \$86,000
- 10 weeks in Brook Army Hospital @ approx. \$6,000/day \$420,000
- 13 weeks physical therapy @ \$1,000/week \$13,000
- 11 weeks of Neuro-cognitive therapy @ approx. \$2,000/month \$6,000
- 3 skin graft surgeries \$60,000
- 1 flap procedure (plastic surgery) \$20,000
- Various dental work and other outpatient healthcare \$4,000
- 355 days of lost work (included 30 days convalescent leave) \$49,000
- Other expenses (legal, insurance, post-hospital tests, family travel) \$105,600

**Approximate total cost \$763,600**

# The Lifetime Effect of Mishap



Although cleared of any negligence or wrongdoing, Neal lives with the fact that he was the one responsible for the death of his two younger children. He has returned to work as a damage control petty officer first class at NAS Meridian.

- One cut to the back of the head requiring a staple.
- One cut with a small burn to the inner bicep.
- Lost two beautiful siblings.

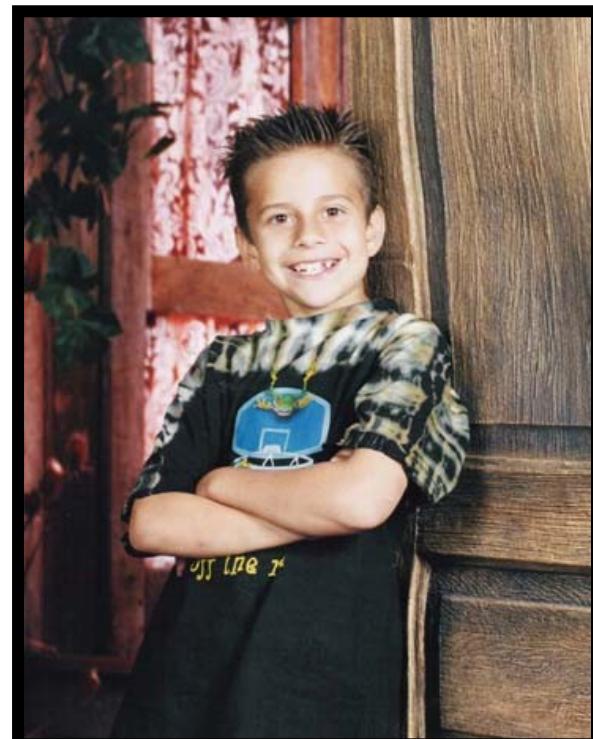


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## Too Young to Die



**Breana Nicole**  
**9 years old**



**Brandon Michael**  
**10 years old**

## A Safety Reminder: Be Aware of Fatigue Symptoms

- **Involuntary eye closing**
- **Frequent yawning**
- **Feeling tired**
- **Inability to stay in lane**
- **Inattention to road signs, road changes, and actions of other drivers**
- **Slower than normal reaction time**
- **Impaired judgment and vision**
- **Disconnected thoughts**
- **No recollection of last several miles driven**
- **Tailgating**